

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:-

Listing of Claims:

1. (canceled)

2. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, which further comprises carrying out the opening of the protective sleeve by the action of gas pressure.

3. (canceled)

4. (canceled)

5. (canceled)

6. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 5, which further comprises exposing the getter by elastic contraction of the protective sleeve after it has one of burst and opened.

7. (canceled)

8. (canceled)

9. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 5, which further comprises providing the protective sleeve as a plurality of rigid parts pressed against one another under surrounding atmospheric pressure and moving apart when pressure in the vacuum chamber reduces below a given level to keep the parts pressed together.

10. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, which further comprises moving at least one part of the sleeve away from the getter by connecting the sleeve to a manipulator actuated from outside the vacuum vessel.

11. (withdrawn) A method for introducing and activating a getter in a vacuum vessel, which comprises:

packaging the getter in a protective sleeve;

introducing the getter packaged in the protective sleeve into the vacuum vessel;

closing off and evacuating the vacuum vessel; and

opening the protective sleeve after the evacuation has commenced.

12. (withdrawn) A getter unit, comprising:

a getter; and

a protective sleeve surrounding said getter, said protective sleeve being at least partly formed from a brittle material destroyed by deformation.

13. (withdrawn) The getter unit according to claim 12, wherein said protective sleeve has at least one breaking point.

14. (withdrawn) A getter unit to be introduced and activated in a vacuum vessel, comprising:

a getter; and

a protective sleeve surrounding said getter, said protective sleeve being at least partly formed from a brittle material destroyed by deformation after the evacuation of the vacuum vessel has commenced.

15. (withdrawn) The getter unit according to claim 14, wherein said protective sleeve has at least one breaking point.

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)

22. (withdrawn) A getter unit, comprising:

a getter; and

a protective sleeve surrounding said getter, said protective sleeve having a plurality of rigid parts held together by a pressure difference between an interior of said protective sleeve and the surrounding atmosphere.

23. (withdrawn) The getter unit according to claim 22, further comprising at least one elastic element acting between said parts and exerting a force driving apart said parts.

24. (withdrawn) The getter unit according to claim 22, wherein said parts are articulately connected to one another.

25. (withdrawn) A getter unit to be introduced and activated in a vacuum vessel, comprising:

a getter; and

a protective sleeve surrounding said getter, said protective sleeve having a plurality of rigid parts held together by a pressure difference between an interior of said protective sleeve and the surrounding atmosphere and opening after the evacuation of the vacuum vessel has commenced.

26. (withdrawn) The getter unit according to claim 25, further comprising at least one elastic element acting between said parts and exerting a force driving apart said parts.

27. (withdrawn) The getter unit according to claim 25, wherein said parts are articulately connected to one another.

28. (new) A method for introducing and activating a getter in a vacuum vessel, which comprises:

introducing the getter packaged in a breakable protective sleeve into the vacuum vessel;

closing off and evacuating said vacuum vessel; and

opening said protective sleeve after the evacuation has commenced by the action of an external pressure deforming the vacuum vessel walls against said protective sleeve during the evacuation to open said protective sleeve by breaking said protective sleeve by contacting said protective sleeve with said walls of said vacuum vessel during the deformation of said vacuum vessel.

29. (new) A method for introducing and activating a getter in a vacuum vessel, which comprises:

introducing the getter packaged in a gastight flexible film protective sleeve filled with a protective gas into the vacuum vessel;

closing off and evacuating said vacuum vessel; and

opening said protective sleeve after the evacuation has commenced by filling said gastight protective sleeve with a protective gas; and

bursting said sleeve by evacuating said vacuum chamber and causing said protective sleeve to be expanded against a projection formed in an interior wall of said vacuum chamber.

30. (new) A getter unit, comprising:

    a getter;

    a protective sleeve surrounding said getter, said protective sleeve being at least partly formed from a flexible film, said film under prestress at surrounding atmospheric pressure; and

        said protective sleeve has at least one breaking point formed therein.

31. (new) A getter unit to be introduced and activated in a vacuum vessel, comprising:

    a getter;

    a protective sleeve surrounding said getter, said protective sleeve having at least a portion formed from a flexible film, said film under prestress at surrounding atmospheric pressure;

        said flexible film portion of said protective sleeve opened after the evacuation of said vacuum vessel has commenced; and

        said protective sleeve has at least one breaking point formed therein.